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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2048  
INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE  
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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3023  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC  
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1320  
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE 3363  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 2749  
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORP  
RUMICEA/USCENTCOM INTEL CEN MACDILL AFB FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BISHKEK 000298

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KG](#)

SUBJECT: PUTATIVE KYRGYZ CONSENSUS OPPOSITION PRESIDENTIAL  
CANDIDATE DISTANCES HERSELF FROM RIVAL OPPOSITIONISTS

REF: A. BISHKEK 260

[1](#)B. BISHKEK 236

[1](#)C. BISHKEK 226

[1](#)D. BISHKEK 197

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Classified By: Ambassador Tatiana C. Gfoeller, Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Former Deputy Prime Minister Ibraimova told the Embassy April 1 that she was disavowing any involvement with the United People's Movement (UPM), an alliance of opposition parties and political figures. She said that the UPM's leaders were driven only by "narrow personal interest," and she believed they would continue to bicker even if they named a unified candidate. Ibraimova claimed that she remains confident of her own appeal as a Presidential candidate, both in the North and the South of the country. She said she would make a public statement soon, but expressed frustration that she had been unable to track down all of the compromising materials that the late Presidential Administration Head Sadyrkulov had collected on President Bakiyev and his family. End Summary.

Distancing Herself from Umbrella Opposition Group  
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[1](#)2. (C) Former Deputy Prime Minister Elmira Ibraimova told an American employee of the Embassy that she was now disavowing any involvement with the United People's Movement (UPM), an umbrella organization of opposition parties and leaders. She stated that all of UPM's leaders were "driven only by narrow personal interests and do not know how to think on the level of the country." She stated that she had seen firsthand bickering among the UPM's leading members and had given up on them. She noted that the question of the selection of the unified candidate hinged on how much money each individual could demonstrably "put down on the table" as being committed to the campaign. Whoever had the most funds would be the candidate. She stated that Ak Shumkar party leader Temir Sariyev was pushing hardest to be the main candidate.  
(Comment: In mid-March, Ibraimova believed that many of

these same leaders had agreed to form a "unified group" to support her as the group's Presidential candidate. Ref B. End Comment.)

13. (C) Because of her concerns about the UPM leadership, she avoided the UPM's March 27 nationwide demonstrations (Ref A), when she was away from Bishkek. She noted that Sariyev had wanted her to speak at rallies in both Sokoluk and Bishkek that day. She said she rejected Sariyev's request because she felt he was trying to bolster his own candidacy, and her presence would serve as a sign that Bakiyev insiders were turning their backs on Bakiyev and turning out to support the opposition. This would have lessened her own stature.

#### Weakness of Other Candidates

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14. (C) Ibraimova remains confident of her own chances as a Presidential candidate. Asked how her campaign would get the necessary support and nationwide reach, Ibraimova laid out her vision of "the configuration of the country." She provided her analysis of the geographical areas of strength of the five likely opposition candidates:

--Temir Sariyev: his only support is in the North, and really only in the Chui Valley and Bishkek, with zero support in the South.

--Omurbek Tekebayev: some limited support in his home rayon of Bazar Korgon in Jalal-Abad Oblast, with small pockets of support around the rest of the country due to the Ata Meken party network.

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--Bakyt Beshimov: only some support in Osh city and areas of Osh Oblast.

--Almaz Atambayev: support only in Issyk Ata rayon of Chui Oblast, and in the North more generally.

--Ismail Isakov: support in only part of Osh Oblast (meaning Alai rayon), with no support in the North.

Ibraimova said that none of the five had raised any "serious funding" to run a campaign, and she predicted that they would continue to bicker, even after selecting a "unified candidate."

#### Confident of Her Own Chances

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15. (C) Ibraimova then explained her own strengths as a candidate. Thanks to the renown of her father in the South, she believed that she would have extensive support across the South. (Note: Before becoming one of the country's most popular Prime Ministers, her father was head of the Osh Oblast Committee of the Communist Party for 11 years, and he was popular for his leadership and having secured centrally funded investments in industry from Moscow. End Note.) Ibraimova felt that she has the support of persons from the northern Chui Valley and in Bishkek, as well as more general support in the North. She also noted that she had substantial nationwide support thanks to the ARIS network. (Note: Before becoming a member of Parliament and then Deputy Prime Minister, Ibraimova was director of the World Bank-funded ARIS rural development program in Kyrgyzstan. End Note.)

16. (C) Finally, she stated that many in the current state apparatus were simply waiting to switch sides when she goes public, and she would have significant support from them. Ibraimova made no mention of funding, only referring to anonymous business persons who were nervous about meeting her but were promising some support through intermediaries. She did not explain why she had not gone to Almaty, as had been

her plan earlier (Ref B). Ibraimova's biggest concern was the Kyrgyz language competency requirement for Presidential candidates, but she felt that with a bit of work she would be able to pass the requirement.

#### Public Statement Soon

17. (C) Asked about when and how she planned to make her public statement, Ibraimova again said that it would be soon. She noted with frustration that she had not been able to track down all of the compromising material exposing corruption by the Bakiyev family that the late Presidential Administration Head Sadyrkulov had kept in his possession. Ibraimova expressed frustration at lack of support from the Embassy staff. She claimed that our interests were centered on Manas Base, which she understood as still being an open matter. Ibraimova also reiterated her request that the U.S. consider providing support to establish a new independent newspaper headed by Turat Akimov, formerly editor in chief of Reporter-Bishkek (see Ref D).

#### Security Concerns

18. (C) Ibraimova noted that she is being followed constantly, and she believed that all of her communications are being listened in on. She noted that she had understood from Sadyrkulov that the Hyatt was not bugged and hence had sought to have meetings there. (She was surprised when her Embassy interlocuter did not think that the Hyatt was a venue secure from eavesdropping.) She has also put cardboard in her

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windows in her apartment in order to counter observation. She said she is being helped by a few former subordinates in ARIS, who serve effectively as her guards.

#### Comment

19. (C) Ibraimova is a respected figure, and she appears to be free from corruption. She is also patriotic and charismatic, and she inspires loyalty among her subordinates and displays an inner strength and determination tinged with a martyr complex. However, it is hard to see how she could mount an effective nationwide campaign without funds -- and especially if she rejects using the other opposition party structures. Finally, the range of media coverage has narrowed since 2004-5, which seriously limits the opposition's ability to get its message to the wider public.  
GFOELLER